

A* ANALYSIS OF THE POEM NETTLES



Nettles

My son aged three fell in the nettle bed.

The word 'bed' contrasts with the word nettle, because bed is a sign of comfort whereas a nettle is a sign of discomfort and pain.

Metaphor-soldiers/war

'Bed' seemed a curious name for those green spears,

Metaphor

That regiment of spite behind the shed:

It was no place for rest. With sobs and tears

5 The boy came seeking comfort and I saw

White blisters beaded on his tender skin.

Personification

We soothed him till his pain was not so raw.

Fierce imagery

At last he offered us a watery grin,

And then I took my hook and hooked the blade

Metaphor-Solders/War

10 And went outside and slashed in fury with it

Till not a nettle in that fierce parade

stood upright any more. Next task: I lit

Metaphor-Solders/War

A funeral pyre to burn the fallen dead.

A turning point - Hint that something in the poem is going to change.

But in two weeks the busy sun and rain

This whole section has taken a turn after the turning point word 'but' and now has a much more casual and calm tone to the poem, which contrasts with the first half of the poem which was constantly hinting towards war/soldiers/fight/death.

15 Had called up tall recruits behind the shed:

My son would often feel sharp wounds again.

First line starts with the same phrase - Emphasise relationship?

An everyday thing

The poem has an iambic pentameter on every other line – 10 syllables on every other line. This could represent the marching of the soldiers or that the rhythm represents an everyday repetitive thing which the narrator comes back to at the end of the poem.

The poem also has an A-B rhyming scheme which could also suggest at the points above.

There seems to be a lot of enjambment in the poem (where the sentence doesn't finish on that line but runs over to the other side. This could suggest at the story of the poem being just a simple anecdote more than a poem.

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